INVINCIBLE: The 10 Lies You Learn Growing Up With Domestic Violence and the Truths to Set You Free

A NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

“Brian (Martin) answers the question, Can a childhood filled with violence and pain be transformed into one filled with strength, love, and freedom? The simple answer is: Yes, it can!”
—FROM THE FOREWORD BY TONY ROBBINS

The 10 Lies You Learn Growing Up with Domestic Violence, and the Truths to Set You Free

INVINCIBLE

BRIAN F. MARTIN

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Book Discussion Guide

Childhood Domestic Violence Association
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Dear friend,

Even though we have never met, I feel as though we are connected. I say this because we both share a similar belief – that which occurs in childhood impacts a life. And we both want to be a part of shaping lives positively.

Yes, of course, we care about children and young adults, but we also equally care about childhood. We have the perspective and insight to know that a child is simply an adult in waiting. And that they will be an adult far longer than they will be a child.

This is the approach I took in researching and writing *INVINCIBLE: The 10 Lies You Learn Growing Up With Domestic Violence, and the Truths to Set You Free*. And what I found, and personally experienced, is that growing up with domestic violence profoundly impacts a life; yet, according to our research, there is very little awareness of this issue.

Any person who grows up in a home living with domestic violence experiences *Childhood Domestic Violence* or CDV. And from a childhood standpoint, domestic violence is violence between your parents or violence towards a parent – perhaps from a stepparent or significant other. The violence can be physical or non-physical, or both. I can’t tell you how often I’ve heard, “there wasn’t physical violence between my parents, but the words they used – I felt them physically.”

Even though UNICEF calls it “one of the most pervasive human rights issues of our time,” there is still less than 10 percent awareness of CDV. One of the reasons is that many who grow up with domestic violence struggle with what to call it. It often is not physical child abuse because they themselves aren’t the recipients of the physical abuse. They cannot call it domestic violence, because that’s between the adults. Researchers often use the phrase “Child Witness to Intimate Partner Violence” or CWIPV – but that hasn’t really caught on. And the word “witness” – people who experienced CDV take issue with it, because it doesn’t adequately reflect the impact.

In the U.S. alone, Childhood Domestic Violence impacts an estimated 15+ million children annually. There are an estimated 40+ million adults alive today who grew up living with domestic violence. Many of them are the parents of the 15+ million children I mention above. And the reason history is repeating itself if because many of them were never made aware of the LIES they grew up to believe...the LIES their children are now growing up to believe. But now is their time. Now is your time to have a significant impact on their lives...and *INVINCIBLE* is, as Tony Robbins wrote, “your roadmap.”

With that said, we developed this Discussion Guide with two key objectives in mind – to provide the reader with a) an overview of how to personally take action on the most important concepts in the book and b) the steps and tools needed to share this information with others.

I am grateful for your time. I believe you will want to share these insights with your colleagues, and that together, you will want to share them with the young people and adults whose lives you have the privilege to touch.

All my best,

Brian F. Martin
Founder of the Childhood Domestic Violence Association
WHO IS INVINCIBLE FOR

INVINCIBLE is a unique tool that is for anyone who grew up living with domestic violence – and those who love them, work with them, teach them, or mentor them. In providing this book and Discussion Guide to you, our expectation is that you and your colleagues interact with a number of children, young adults, adults, or parents, many of whom are growing up or grew up living with domestic violence. They can start to connect the dots, learn the key messages, and begin to reclaim their lives or help another do this through you. However, the book was written in such a way that anyone impacted – adult or teenager – could pick it up themselves and benefit from the key concepts and principles communicated in its pages.

THE BOOK AT A GLANCE

FOREWORD by Tony Robbins
Preface by Renee McDonald, PhD
Read Me First
Chapter 1: Undiscovered Gifts
Chapter 2: Guilty to Free
Chapter 3: Resentful to Compassionate
Chapter 4: Sad to Grateful
Chapter 5: Alone to Trusting
Chapter 6: Angry to Passionate
Chapter 7: Hopeless to Guided
Chapter 8: Worthless to Accomplished
Chapter 9: Fearful to Confident
Chapter 10: Self-Conscious to Attractive
Chapter 11: Unloved to Loving
PLANNING A GROUP DISCUSSION: RECOMMENDED STEPS

Below is an overview of the key steps we recommend you consider in preparing for a group discussion/training:

1) READ THROUGH THE DISCUSSION GUIDE
   The Discussion Guide provides the highlights of the book, as well as the key elements for planning and executing an effective discussion/training. These include an overview of Childhood Domestic Violence (CDV), lies and truths, key messages, discussion questions, a section on talking to children about CDV, post-discussion action steps, book quotes, testimonials, reviews, and some additional information and resources.

2) REVIEW KEY SECTIONS FROM INVINCIBLE
   If you have the time to read INVINCIBLE cover to cover, you will likely gain many valuable insights and discover other resources cited in the book, all of which can help you holistically address the issue of Childhood Domestic Violence at your organization, agency, educational institution, classroom, or your community at large. But you do not need to read the entire book to benefit from its key messages. By simply reading the Preface, Foreword, Read Me First section, and Chapter 1, plus the short summaries at the end of each subsequent chapter, you will gain a solid understanding of the key principles.

3) IDENTIFY YOUR AUDIENCE AND DETERMINE THE FORMAT OF YOUR DISCUSSION
   Determine if you will hold a discussion/training directly for the young people or adults you work with, or rather for those who serve them – such as staff, volunteers, parents (if applicable), and others. Your audience and approach will vary based on your constituents, the type of services you provide, and your standard organizational protocols and procedures. You may incorporate this discussion/training into an already existing educational continuum or you may wish to arrange it as a separate training. Also, depending on your work and protocols, you may structure this as a lecture-type training, or you may instead set it up as a more information, open discussion where each participant receives a copy of the key Discussion Guide sections in advance and then comes prepared for dialogue.

   However you chose to approach this, we would recommend setting aside an hour, which should allow sufficient time to cover the essential material. Of particular importance are the following key Discussion Guide sections: The Issue, 10 Key Lies & Truths of CDV, Key Messages & Take-Aways, and Key Questions for Discussion.

4) ASSESS THE BENEFITS OF THE DISCUSSION
   Make copies and distribute the Evaluation Sheet at the end of this Discussion Guide to each participant at the beginning of your session, so they can rate the discussion/training, share additional thoughts about the issue, and pose any questions that were not answered by the discussion/training. We are happy to provide additional information concerning any questions that may arise during the course of the discussion/training.

   Feel free to reach out to us at book@cdv.org or info@cdv.org for more tips, ideas, or support, as you work to plan your discussion/training. We are happy to offer additional resources or brainstorm with you regarding an appropriate training approach that would best suit your audience and optimize the educational value of the book and the training/discussion session.
THE ISSUE

- Did you grow up living with domestic violence? Asking yourself or another this question is a critical first step, as it has never really been asked or answered openly before.

- Any person who grows up living in a home with domestic violence experiences Childhood Domestic Violence or CDV.

- From a childhood standpoint, domestic violence is violence between your parents or violence towards a parent – perhaps from a stepparent or significant other. The violence can be physical or non-physical, or both. And it is not directed towards the child, so this is a separate adversity from child abuse, which it is often confused with.

- UNICEF refers to it as “one of the most pervasive human rights issues of our time,” as it has a profound impact on one’s life and hopes for the future.

- Globally, an estimated 1 billion lives are impacted. In the U.S. alone, an estimated 40+ million adults grew up living with domestic violence and an estimated 15+ million children are grow up with domestic violence. A large percentage of these children are being raised by these same adults.

- CDV negatively wires a developing brain, encoding a series of negative beliefs – LIES – a person grows up to believe about themselves and the world.

- These LIES, which can last well into adulthood, often cause those impacted to struggle in one or all four key areas of their life: physical health, mental health, behavior, and relationships.

- Consequently, those who grow up with CDV are 6x more likely to commit suicide, 50% more likely to abuse drugs or alcohol, and 74% more likely to commit a violent crime.

- Growing up in a home with domestic violence is also the best predictor of becoming either a perpetrator or victim of domestic violence later in life.

- But even if they don’t become one of these statistics, according to a leading expert on how the brain learns, as adults, they will not reach their full potential...UNLESS...they unlearn what was learned in childhood.

- Awareness, understanding, and sharing are essential for change to occur.

- But despite the immense potential negative impact and the scope of the problem, awareness is currently <15% and no universal name has ever existed to frame this category of childhood adversity...until now.

- As a society we’re not aware of it as a major childhood adversity with potentially grave implications. And the majority of those impacted aren’t aware that they experienced it and how it impacted them...because they don’t even know what to call it.

- CDV is the last remaining unknown, unnamed, unaddressed, untreated major childhood adversity.
10 KEY LIES & TRUTHS OF CDV, AS OUTLINED IN INVINCIBLE

If you or someone you care about grew up living with domestic violence, there are certain LIES you or they learned. These LIES may be holding you/them back from reaching your/their full potential and experiencing the happiness that is meant for you/them. But for every LIE, there is a transformative TRUTH. And buried beneath all of your/their childhood pain is a whole arsenal of hidden strengths – special gifts. Because you/they survived difficulties others never had to face, you/they are much stronger than you/they realize.

INVINCIBLE exposes the LIES, reveals the TRUTHS, and offers the insight and skills you/they need to go from living the LIES to embracing the TRUTHS.

LIE: GUILTY, because it was your fault – you should have stopped it.
TRUTH: FREE from the illusion of guilt, because a child is never responsible for the actions of an adult.

LIE: RESENTFUL, bitter, having no true compassion for another.
TRUTH: COMPASSIONATE for others and self, because you know what real hurt feels like.

LIE: SAD, hurt, often feeling a sense of loss.
TRUTH: GRATEFUL, because you focus on what you’ve gained and what you’ve gained, not what you’ve lost.

LIE: ALONE, truly not connected to others.
TRUTH: TRUSTING, because as you assume another’s intent is positive, you will never be alone.

LIE: ANGRY, prone to violence and in a frequent state of frustration.
TRUTH: PASSIONATE, as you take control of the energy from anger and point it towards your passion.

LIE: HOPELESS, because often life has no purpose and nothing works out.
TRUTH: GUIDED, as now that you know the TRUTH, there is great hope for a new beginning.

LIE: WORTHLESS, unimportant, not good enough, a failure.
TRUTH: ACCOMPLISHED, because as you realize what you had to overcome as a child, few other obstacles compare.

LIE: FEARFUL, uncertain, timid, lacking true confidence inside.
TRUTH: CONFIDENT, because you know what real fear feels like, and this gives you confidence to face anything.

LIE: SELF-CONSCIOUS, unattractive, not good enough for another.
TRUTH: ATTRACTIVE, because as you realize the TRUTH, you feel more esteem for self and are more attractive to others.

LIE: UNLOVED, not able to really love or be loved.
TRUTH: LOVED and loving, as making others feel cared for, appreciated and important makes you feel the same.
KEY MESSAGES & TAKE-AWAYS

- **Childhood Domestic Violence (CDV)** is when you grow up living in a home with domestic violence.
- CDV can have a profound and lasting impact on your life and hopes for the future.
- According to research, awareness, understanding, and sharing are key to reaching your full potential.
- But awareness is <15% and almost no one talks about it, because as a society, we’re not aware of it, and it has never had a universal name, so those impacted don’t even know what to call it.
- If you grew up living with domestic violence, you no longer have to live with the impact today.
- Growing up in that house, there is a set of **LIES** you learn about who you believe you are, and they may be holding you back from reaching your full potential and experiencing the success and happiness meant for you.
- But for every **LIE**, there is a corresponding transformative **TRUTH**. And buried beneath all of your childhood pain is a whole arsenal of hidden strengths – special gifts. Because you survived difficulties others never had to face, you are much stronger than you realize.
- The **TRUTH** is that no obstacle you will ever face in life can compare to what you went through in that home and have already conquered. You are INVINCIBLE...although you may not realize it yet. It’s time you did.
- You are NOT...**guilty, resentful, sad, alone, angry, hopeless, worthless, fearful, self-conscious, or unloved** – the **10 LIES** you may have learned growing up with domestic violence.
- You ARE...**free, compassionate, grateful, trusting, passionate, guided, accomplished, confident, attractive, and loving** – the transformative **TRUTHS** that can set you free.
KEY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. After reading the book, what would you say is its purpose?
2. Did you grow up living with domestic violence or do you know someone who did?
3. What did you learn about the scope of the problem and the gravity of the impact CDV has on a life?
4. Do you think a child has a role to play in protecting or intervening on behalf of an adult when domestic violence is taking place in the home?
5. Why is this often considered a difficult topic to talk about?
6. Why do you think it is important to talk about it – individually and for society as a whole?
7. Which LIE(s) or TRUTH(s) speak to you most powerfully?
8. Which LIES do you think are most common among those who grow up living with domestic violence?
9. What are some ways experiencing CDV can impact someone’s feelings, actions, behavior, relationships, and hopes for the future? Point to examples from the personal stories shared in INVINCIBLE or your own experience.
10. At the end of Chapter 2 – Guilty to Free – you will find a summary. Read aloud the LIE, the Why, then the TRUTH. Repeat this with each chapter’s summary. What are your thoughts after reading/hearing each summary?
11. How has your perception of CDV changed since reading/receiving this training about INVINCIBLE?
12. Which fact(s) about CDV surprised you the most?
13. How does Amy’s experience highlight the Sad LIE? (Chapter 4)
14. How does Carlie’s experience highlight the Alone LIE? (Chapter 5)
15. How does Roger’s experience highlight the Unloved LIE? (Chapter 11)
16. How can each of us help children of domestic violence unlearn what they learned growing up in those homes and reach their full potential?
17. What are some key messages you could share to help someone who grew up living with domestic violence?
TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT CHILDHOOD DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

At times, opportunities may arise to speak with an impacted child about this one-on-one. But often, the easiest way to introduce Childhood Domestic Violence (CDV) to children is in a group setting – by approaching the topic as an issue many children face across the globe – much like bullying and teen relationships violence.

KEY STEPS TO CONSIDER

1) Ask the Group to Define Domestic Violence: What comes to mind when you hear “domestic violence”?

2) Define Domestic Violence: Domestic violence is when one adult in a house tries to control the actions of the other adult in the house by yelling, bullying, or hurting them.

3) Ask the Group to Generate Ideas About What Childhood Domestic Violence Might Be: What comes to mind when you hear “Childhood Domestic Violence?”

4) Define Childhood Domestic Violence: Childhood Domestic Violence (CDV) is when you grow up living in a home with violence between your parents or towards a parent – perhaps from a stepparent or significant other. The violence can be physical or non-physical – for example, yelling, threatening, hurtful words, putting each other down, etc. – or both. And the violence is NOT directed towards you, the child.

5) Ask the Group to Generate a List About Feelings: Think about what it might feel like to grow up living with domestic violence. Let’s talk particularly about the following feelings: GUILTY, RESENTFUL, SAD, ALONE, ANGRY, HOPELESS, WORTHLESS, FEARFUL, SELF-CONSCIOUS, UNLOVED. Let’s keep a running list.

6) Ask the Group to Generate a List About Impact on Behavior or Attitude: How might living in a home like this impact one’s daily activities, like schoolwork, hobbies, trying new things, or friendships with other people? How might it impact their behavior? Might they lose interest in hobbies and activities, do poorly in school, mistrust others, keep a distance? Might they act out to get attention, bully others, or “overreact” easily? What are some other ways they might behave?

7) Acknowledge All Responses: Listen carefully and validate their responses. Reassure them “there’s no wrong answer” and encourage them to fully express their thoughts and feelings.

8) Validate Their Feelings:
   • No child ever deserves to experience this in their home or in their family
   • It must be so scary and confusing to live in a home like this

9) Share the Key Messages of Hope:
   • It’s not okay.
   • I care about you. Your feelings are important.
   • If you’re living in a home like this, I’m sorry you have to face/see/hear this in your home.
   • You need to know that it isn’t your fault and you didn’t do anything to cause it.
   • A child is never responsible for the actions of an adult, so it’s not your job to stop it.
   • There is nothing you could have done to prevent/change it.
   • I’m here to listen if you ever want to talk.
• (IF DISCUSSING IN PRIVATE) I hear you. I believe you.
• You’re not alone. Many, many other children are going through the same thing. And many adults also went through it when they were children.
• You can’t control what is happening in your home now, but you will be able to control what happens in your home when you get older. You can choose a different path.
• You have had to overcome obstacles that other children never had to face and overcome. What fear could compare to the fear you’ve already faced and conquered? Because of that, you have a special strength inside you that can help you overcome any challenges you face in life.
• Come to me and we can talk more about what to do to keep you safe if it happens again. (For example, staying in your room, picking a safe place to hide, going to the neighbors, or calling 911).
• If you want me to get help for you to make it stop, we can talk about that as well.

10) Acknowledge Their Strengths, Offer Encouragement: For example...
• You are so smart and you’re great at _____________. I bet one day you will make a great ____________. Keep up the wonderful work!”
  OR
• I see your leadership qualities and you also have a gift for _________. You could become a great ________ someday. I encourage you to pursue these wonderful gifts.”

11) Share These Additional Messages With Older Children (Adolescents and Teens):
• You are facing and overcoming obstacles every day that other children never had to. So, when you face challenges as you get older, you can draw strength from this by remembering that you were able to get through this, so what else can you not get through in life?
• Some very successful people, like former President Bill Clinton, Halle Berry, Curtis Martin, Patrick Stewart, Christina Aguilera, senators, athletes, business leaders and many others went through what you’re going through when they were children. When they grew up, they chose not to use violence and anger. They instead chose to channel their energy into passion for achieving their goals. They went on to live great, very successful lives.

THE BENEFITS OF TALKING TO CHILDREN DIRECTLY

When you approach children directly and give them the opportunity to talk about it, they feel safe, cared for and understood. They also no longer feel alone. They learn that using violence as a way to solve problems is not OK or normal. They also learn that it isn’t their fault or the result of something they did. GUILT/SHAME is the most common LIE children believe growing up with CDV, which often persists into adulthood, keeping them from their full potential. Conversation also lets children know that it is OK to talk about this openly and express their feelings. Finally, they understand that you’re a safe, trustworthy, caring adult they can turn to for support and confide in.

OUR CHANGE A LIFE PROGRAM

To learn more about talking to children about CDV, take our free, self-administered, 40-minute online training program, CHANGE A LIFE. This program, developed by leading researcher in the world and endorsed by the U.S. Fund for UNICEF and Children’s Mercy Hospitals, is the first of its kind. It is designed to train any caring adult to be a protective factor in the life of a child growing up with domestic violence. By taking some simple actions and sharing a few key messages, you can help a child see the TRUTH they may otherwise be unable to see for themselves and help change their life. Visit www.cdv.org/tools-and-resources/the-change-a-life-program to get started.
POST-DISCUSSION ACTION STEPS

After a discussion of the book, readers are often left with a desire for more – more learning and giving.

At www.cdv.org and particularly www.cdv.org/get-involved, you’ll find a variety of ways to get involved. But the best ways are often the simplest and some take only minutes. Below are a few of them.

Start a Conversation
One of the most effective ways to increase awareness about Childhood Domestic Violence (CDV) is to talk about it. By simply starting a conversation about the issue or the book INVINCIBLE with others – family, friends, coworkers, neighbors, acquaintances, or a child you mentor – you can help build greater awareness and understanding of the issue and its impact. Great forums to start or add to a conversation or learn more are our Facebook (www.facebook.com/CDV) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/CDVorg) pages.

Become a Book Ambassador
Consider hosting a book club or discussion group in your home, civic club, affiliated organization, or educational or government institution to start a conversation, elevate awareness of the issue, and help deliver the answers and solutions to those who grew up living with domestic violence.

Donate a Book
Visit our site to donate a book to someone else in need at www.cdv.org/get-involved/donate (halfway down the page). A portion of your donation is tax-deductible and 100% will finance the delivery of a copy/copies of the book to a DV shelter, youth development or crisis prevention organization, community center, university social education department, or social welfare agency. Or you can make a general, unrestricted donation on our website by going to the same page (www.cdv.org/get-involved/donate), 100% of which will go towards the development and deployment of programs and tools such as this book, to help those who grow up living with domestic violence overcome the impact and reach their full potential.

Take Our Unique, Evidence-Based Online Program, CHANGE A LIFE
Need help coming up with the right things to say to a child who is living with domestic violence? 40 minutes of your time can help change a life. By taking our groundbreaking simple, self-administered CHANGE A LIFE program, you can learn how a few simple actions and key messages can help change the life of a child impacted by CDV. Refer to the CHANGE A LIFE section of page 12 or visit www.cdv.org/tools-and-resources/the-change-a-life-program.

Volunteer
You could volunteer with the Childhood Domestic Violence Association to help expand our reach. There are many ways, big or small, to contribute to our work. For more information, please email us at info@cdv.org.

Organize a Local Social Action Committee
If you are eager to put the spotlight on CDV, you could start or join a CDV membership group or Social Action Committee and invite others who are impacted or local administrators, policymakers, and activists with an interest in this issue to join. Hold monthly meetings with action items – from learning about the issue and its impact to reaching out to local officials, to connecting with press, or planning an event to break the silence and build awareness. These are effective ways to elevate CDV as a critical issue in the community’s consciousness and keep it top-of-mind, fostering a deeper understanding of the problem and commitment to the solutions.

Start a Virtual or Physical Chapter
If you would like to do more on a more consistent, engaged level in your community, consider starting a local virtual or physical CDV chapter. We will support you in this effort and provide the tools and resources you will need to start the chapter and succeed in making a positive impact.
“Anyone can create the life he or she desires. You too can join the ranks of courageous men and women who have decided to see themselves not as victims but as whom they really are – free, compassionate, grateful, trusting, passionate, guided, accomplished, confident, attractive, loving.” –Pg 26, Chapter 1

“I am free from the environment of my childhood. It is now my time to be free from the illusion of guilt and shame.” –Pg 54, Chapter 2

“Only those who have truly suffered can understand what suffering feels like. Because of this I have reached a plane that few humans can reach.” –Pg 80, Chapter 3

“The first rule of dealing with sadness...Don’t hurt them the way you were hurt.” –Pg 95, Chapter 4

“I know to trust is to take a risk, but I had to take many chances when I was a child, so I am comfortable doing so and have a hidden talent that allows me to take intelligent risks.” –Pg 123, Chapter 5

“When a thought triggers a feeling of anger, there is great energy produced inside of me. I take control of this energy.” –Pg 142, Chapter 6

“When I was young, I had a purpose – to get out of that environment – and I achieved it. I achieved the most important purpose of my life at the time. Because of that, I have the means to realize my purpose in life now.” –Pg 163, Chapter 7

“There is no obstacle that I will face today that could compare to what I went through as a child and already conquered. I am invincible, unconquerable.” –Pg 179, Chapter 8

“There is no fear that I could potentially face this day that will compare to the fears that I have already faced and overcome.” –Pg 200, Chapter 9

“No matter what we look like, if we believe we truly are guilty, resentful, sad, alone, angry, hopeless, worthless, fearful, and unloved...we can’t help but feel self-conscious.” –Pg 204, Chapter 10

“You believe you weren’t loved by those who created you, so you wonder who else could ever truly love you.” –Pg 241, Chapter 11

“The biggest lie of all is this: Because of what I experienced I can’t. But all this time you’ve had the strengths, those secret weapons that will transform the biggest lie into the biggest truth: Because of what I experienced, I uniquely can.” –Pg 245, My Wish for You

Learn more about the book at www.cdv.org/tools-and-resources/invincible
“Packed with inspirational stories of those who through courage and compassion have transformed their lives, this is a helpful book for anyone who grew up living with domestic violence. It shows that it is possible to overcome the obstacles of a childhood filled with violence and move forward.” –Stephen Joseph, author of What Doesn’t Kill Us: The New Psychology of Posttraumatic Growth

“INVINCIBLE can be a catalyst for change in the lives of millions who grew up living with domestic violence as it gives them a compelling roadmap on the journey to heal and attain the lives they were always meant to have. It is a valuable resource that can renew their hope and guide them on the path to reaching their full potential.” –Caryl Stern, CEO of the U.S. Fund for UNICEF

“This is a unique book filled with inspiring and positive suggestions for adults seeking to overcome the harmful effects of exposure to domestic violence during childhood. It is solidly based on research findings but written in a straightforward way that is readily accessible to readers. I highly recommend it.” –Dr. Sandra A. Graham-Bermann, one of the world’s leading authorities on the impact of family violence on children, Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry, University of Michigan

“This deeply compassionate book will help people who grew up with domestic violence heal the wounds of their past while providing a clear roadmap for a healthier and happier future.” –Kristin Neff, PhD, Associate Professor, Human Development and Culture, Educational Psychology Dept, University of Texas at Austin, Author, Self-Compassion: The proven power of being kind to yourself

“INVINCIBLE offers a combination of personal accounts blended with evidence-based facts that combine to produce hope for the many who have grown up with domestic violence. It is also an important guidebook to help people who care about young people to compassionately encourage and support them on their journey to make peace with the past and believe in the future.” –Les Nichols, National Vice President of Child & Club Safety, Boys & Girls Clubs of America

"Brian Martin’s narrative INVINCIBLE gives hard evidence that, for children growing up with violence, history need not be destiny. This inspirational story provides great hope by showing us that resilience is a process we nurture in ourselves, not an inborn characteristic we have no control over." –M. Denise Dowd, MD, MPH, FAAP, Associate Medical Director, Faculty Development, Children’s Mercy Hospital, Professor of Pediatrics, University of Missouri-Kansas City

“Filled with vivid emotion, INVINCIBLE is attention grabbing and revealing, giving us insight into the world of CDV. It will be a valuable tool for our staff and New York City’s most vulnerable population – its children. This book provides a new and unique approach – research based and proven messages that actually work. As part of the staff of the New York City Administration for Children’s Services, I’m grateful to CDV for this opportunity to be involved on the ground level of this project.” –Trevor M. John, Acting Associate Commissioner, Placement Stability, Pre-Placement and Placement Services, NYC Administration for Children’s Services, Division of Family Permanency Services

“INVINCIBLE is poignant, challenging, illuminating, and compassionate – all at the same time. Brian does a fantastic job of illustrating points with real-life stories and a fresh perspective. The book goes way beyond describing the issue; it provides clear insight into the thinking and behavior patterns that result from these experiences. Readers are not alone.” –Chris Newlin, MS, LPC, Executive Director, National Children’s Advocacy Center

“There are children in every school who are living with domestic violence, and there are many staff and parents in those communities who grew up in similar homes themselves. INVINCIBLE has great potential to assist those in leadership positions with helping all who have been affected by Childhood Domestic Violence heal and thrive, creating healthier, happier individuals and communities.” –Gayle Denny, Executive Director, Evangelical Lutheran Education Association
SAMPLE BOOK REVIEWS

“All I can say is WOW. I had no idea that a BILLION people in the world have grown up in a home with domestic violence. It's scary to think about how many children grow up seeing their parents fight both physically and with their words. It has a powerful message that is clear from the beginning.” –Jessica Holbrook, Goodreads

“I found the book informative, honest, and eye opening.” –Christine Beaty, Goodreads

“The numbers are staggering the awareness minimal. Unless you have survived this atrocity it may be difficult to understand how this could be. Hopefully this book raises awareness, involvement and understanding. That those who read it will find it within themselves to reach out to someone in this situation. No someone else won’t step in and when no one steps in the damage deepens the negative beliefs are reinforced. I look forward to the release of this book.” –Colleen, Goodreads

“After reading through the Foreword, Preface, and Read me first I was instantly drawn to figure out what else was waiting in the book. What I had read through gave me a sense of enlightenment being a child who grew up witnessing domestic violence on occasions. There are statements in there that are completely true. One statement that stuck out to me was in the first chapter, "To build self-control you must first have self-awareness." I was really impressed in the knowledge I’ve gained that this is a serious issue and it’s completely silent and is immensely common. I really didn’t know that I would be so deeply moved and motivated to learn more about a subject that I’ve honestly always felt should be kept to ourselves. Honestly we shouldn’t be keeping this to ourselves or letting it affect our lives negatively as adults. It’s been a real eye opener and honestly I've changed my thought process a little in the few days I've read this and I do feel that I shouldn't let that define who I am NOW.” –Kathleen Kellams, Goodreads

“I found that I could not stop reading I would recommend this book to others especially if this is something you are experiencing now or did as a child don't let the cyde repeat itself.” –Christina, Goodreads

“This book helps you gain an understanding of people who have grown up with domestic violence as well as ways to become free.” –Kandi Kay, Goodreads

“Brian targets the often unknown truths about child abuse and explains them in a way everyone can understand. Being a victim or even a child abuser, once you answer the question "Why?", can empower you to build a great future for yourself.” –Ayla Sinclair, Goodreads

“Invincible gives a huge insight to the world of domestic violence that many people don’t realize exists. The book appears to help in the healing of someone who has experienced it, and a resource to those that want to help a friend or loved one. The facts and statements produced by UNICEF are just shocking. I think it needs to be read a lot by others as well. We need to tell people that this world exists for some so they know they aren't alone any more.” –Erica Davis, Goodreads

“Reading the first chapter of this book I really wanted to read more. I see and hear of way too many children being raised in homes where this is going on and it truly breaks my heart. I think too many adults suffer in silence and it is time we put an end to this. Thank you Brian Martin for writing this book and helping so many people out there that are suffering and afraid to speak.” –Marci Gallison, Goodreads

“From what I read this book is great. It seems like it would be extremely helpful and encouraging to kids who grew up in homes with domestic violence. I think it's important for kids to learn that their childhood does not have to define your future. The stories gives a good depiction of how a child going through domestic violence truly feels. I
believe this would be a great book to have in school classrooms or libraries and available for all children to read.” – Jamie Briggs, Goodreads

“I'm thoroughly intrigued by psychology and surprised I'd never given much thought to Childhood Domestic Violence as much as I should have. I'm intrigued by this book because the author didn't only do his own research, he shared his own childhood experiences. I almost cried when I read him and his mother both slept with weapons as protection from her boyfriend. These are things as kids you'll never forget. I couldn't believe there are more children in women's shelters, than women. Seriously so heartbreaking. I believe if even if one person feels this in their heart it will start a change and bring awareness to our very precious babies' lives!” – Amber Pannell, Goodreads

“As a teacher I have come across several children that come from homes where domestic violence is commonplace. This book provides good insight into what children in homes where domestic violence is present are feeling. Reading the foreword the message of overcoming is strong and easy to relate to.” – Nikki Edmeier, Goodreads

“If you or someone else has ever experienced Childhood Domestic Violence, you need to read this book and go to the CDV.org site for information. The statistics are staggering. Seeing this through the eyes of a child is an eye opener. We all need the truth of Childhood Domestic Violence. Brian F. Martin is educating the world with the truth. Read this book!” – Jillian, Goodreads

“The writing style feels natural and is easy to understand. The topic is one which needs more light shed on it than one book can do but this certainly is a huge step to educating the community on the tragedies that happen behind closed doors. I am looking forward to continuing this read and further understanding the issue that plagues society.” – Samantha Mcgee, Goodreads

“This book seems to be very powerful in that the author explains his personal experiences and how he was able to get through growing up around domestic violence. It's written in such a way that the reader can almost feel the pain of the writer. I believe this book would help so many people understand what happened during their childhood. It also could help others in seeing the signs of children who are around it to maybe stop this.” – Megan Singletary, Goodreads

“This book has opened my eyes to see that domestic violence is more common that once thought. A lot more children have to deal with the aftermath than one would expect. I am so happy that this book was made, as it will bring this serious issue to light. This is a must read for everyone.” – Gabrielle O'brien, Goodreads
THE AUTHOR

Brian F. Martin is one of the roughly 1 billion people alive today who grew up living with domestic violence. The impact of this experience lasted into adulthood, but his quest for answers to long-unasked questions eventually led him to a revelation: the unlikely gifts and hidden truths that the experience gave him – and has given others who have lived through the same circumstances.

By rejecting the LIES that he learned in childhood and believed throughout his life, he set off on a course to reaching his full potential. He founded several multi-million dollar global businesses, cultivated a confident mindset, forged loving relationships and developed a deep connection with his children.

In 2007, he founded the Makers of Memories Foundation, which later became the Childhood Domestic Violence Association – a nonprofit organization dedicated to connecting with and supporting anyone who grows up living with domestic violence.

Brian and his work have been featured in the New York Times, USA Today, The Wall Street Journal, and Forbes. He has testified before Congress, appeared on national television programs, including Dr. Phil, he is a regular contributor to The Huffington Post, and he produced the award-winning documentary, THE CHILDREN NEXT DOOR.

See the full Author Q&A at www.cdv.org/tools-and-resources/invincible/about-the-author.

FOREWORD BY TONY ROBBINS

Tony Robbins, best-selling author and peak performance coach, contributed the Foreword to INVINCIBLE. He had this to say about the book: “Brian Martin answers the question, Can a childhood filled with violence and pain be transformed into one filled with strength, love, and freedom? The simple answer is: Yes, it can!”

See the video excerpt from the Foreword by Tony Robbins at www.cdv.org/tools-and-resources/invincible.

THE ASSOCIATION

The Childhood Domestic Violence Association is a nonprofit that works to increase awareness of Childhood Domestic Violence as an issue affecting hundreds of millions, to empower caring adults, communities and organizations to serve as a lifeline for those children affected, and to educate adults who experienced Childhood Domestic Violence as to the long-term impact so they can strive to overcome.

Working with leading researchers and using the best known practices in the field, we develop and deploy groundbreaking scalable tools that have never existed before. We partner with leading organizations that directly touch the lives of children and adults who are growing up/grew up living with domestic violence. Our tools and resources are used to educate, train, and empower them to reclaim their lives and reach their full potential.

Brian F. Martin, author of INVINCIBLE, is Founder and CEO of the Childhood Domestic Violence Association.

Learn more or join the movement at www.cdv.org / www.cdv.org/get-involved/partner / www.facebook.com/CDV / www.twitter.com/CDVorg
POST-BOOK DISCUSSION EVALUATION

1. What organization or educational institution are you with?

2. Why did you organize/attend this discussion/training?
   a. Personal desire
   b. Required for _____________________________________________________________
   c. Other ___________________________________________________________________

3. Did you grow up living in a home with domestic violence?
   a. No
   b. Yes
   c. Still not sure

4. Do you know, care about, mentor, or teach someone who grew up/is growing up in a home with domestic violence?
   a. No
   b. Yes
   c. Still not sure

5. If you or someone you know did grow up in a home with domestic violence, were you aware that you or they experienced Childhood Domestic Violence (CDV) before this discussion/training?
   a. No, I didn’t realize until now
   b. I knew I/they experienced something but didn’t know what or what to call it
   c. Yes, I knew exactly what I/they experienced

6. If you didn’t grow up in a home like this, how much did you know about this issue and how it impacts a life before this discussion/training?
   a. I knew very little
   b. I knew it was an issue but was not aware of the magnitude & profound impact on a life
   c. I already knew a great deal both about the scope of the problem & its impact on a life

7. Did you read the book INVINCIBLE, which is the foundation of this discussion/training, in full?
   a. No
   b. Yes
   c. I read parts of it
   d. I read the book SAMPLER that accompanies the book
   e. I read the Discussion Guide only in preparation for the discussion/training

8. If you participated in organizing this discussion/training, was the Discussion Guide helpful in guiding you through the preparation and the discussion itself?
   a. No
   b. Yes
   c. Somewhat

9. If you participated in organizing this discussion/training and used the Discussion Guide to help you prepare and facilitate the training, what in the Discussion Guide was most helpful?
10. What part of this discussion/training did you find most informative, insightful and compelling?

11. What is the most important thing you learned from this discussion/training that you didn’t know before?

12. If you have read the book *INVINCIBLE* in its entirety, how helpful would you rate it as a tool in the discussion of Childhood Domestic Violence (CDV) and a catalyst for hope and change?

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

13. If you have NOT read the book *INVINCIBLE* in its entirety, how helpful would you rate this discussion/training in educating you about Childhood Domestic Violence (CDV), its impact on a life, and the solutions you have available at hand?

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

15. What are your key take-aways from *INVINCIBLE* or this discussion/training?

16. Has this discussion/training helped you to better understand the implications of CDV and to better prepare to be a protective factor in the life of an adult or young adult who grew up/is growing up with domestic violence, and help foster their resiliency?
   a. Yes, a lot
   b. Somewhat, but I’d like to know more
   c. No, I don’t feel better prepared

17. What questions do you have that weren’t answered during the discussion/training?

18. What would you have liked to learn more about regarding Childhood Domestic Violence (CDV) that was not sufficiently covered in this discussion/training, the Discussion Guide, or the book *INVINCIBLE*?

19. Other comments?
Childhood Domestic Violence Association